

# FINAL BILL REPORT

## SSB 5376

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**Brief Description:** Promoting awareness of the governor's office of the education ombuds.

**Sponsors:** Senate Committee on Early Learning & K-12 Education (originally sponsored by Senators Wilson, C., Wellman, Conway, Das, Hunt, Kuderer, Liias, Nobles and Saldaña).

**Senate Committee on Early Learning & K-12 Education**  
**House Committee on Education**

**Background:** In 2006, the Office of the Education Ombuds (OEO) within the Office of the Governor was created. OEO's purpose is to provide information to parents, students, and others regarding their rights and responsibilities with respect to the state's public elementary and secondary system and advocating on behalf of students.

OEO has the following powers and duties:

- develop parental involvement materials and identify obstacles and recommend strategies for greater parent and community involvement;
- identify and recommend strategies for improving the success rates of ethnic and racial student groups and students with disabilities, with disproportionate academic achievement;
- refer complainants and others to appropriate resources, agencies, or departments;
- facilitate the resolution of complaints made by parents and students;
- consult with representatives of certain organizations and groups;
- serve as lead agency to provide resources and tools about public school anti-harassment policies and strategies; and
- perform such other functions consistent with the purpose of OEO.

OEO must treat all matters as confidential except as necessary to enable the OEO to perform the duties of the office.

### **Summary:**

Beginning August 1, 2023, public schools, including charter schools and state-tribal compact schools, and institutional education providers must provide students and their parents or guardians with a description of the services available through the OEO and the OEO's contact information at the time of initial enrollment or admission.

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*This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.*

Public schools and institutional education providers must either:

- include on their website a description of the OEO services and link to the OEO's website; or
- provide this information in existing materials shared annually such as welcome packets, orientation guides, and newsletters.

Public schools and institutional education providers are encouraged to take both of these actions.

By July 1, 2022, OEO must develop and make a template of the required information available upon request and updated as needed. OEO must translate this template into Spanish and include other languages as resources allow.

**Votes on Final Passage:**

2021 Regular Session

Senate 44 3

2022 Regular Session

Senate 44 4

House 94 1 (House amended)

Senate 47 1 (Senate concurred)

**Effective:** Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.